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# L E T T E R

TO THE REVEREND

Sir HARRY TRELAWNY, Bart. A.B.

OCCASIONED BY HIS

## S E R M O N,

PREACHED at TAUNTON, MAY 26, 1779,

Before an Assembly of

PROTESTANT DISSENTING MINISTERS.

By THOMAS READER.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

*AS I did not receive Sir Harry Trelawny's Sermon till the latter end of last September, near four months after it was preached, I hope some Apology will be afforded me for the delay of this Letter.*

*The Reader is likewise desired to observe, that though the following pages immediately relate to the Sermon abovementioned, there are several remarks interspersed on some publications that have lately appeared in the religious world, which it was thought proper to take notice of, as they are connected with the subjects under discussion. This, it is hoped, will be excused by my Readers in general, and by the Reverend Gentleman to whom I address myself, in particular.*

*As the depravity of nature inclines men to read what may be written against the truth, rather than what may be said in its defence, I think it necessary to declare, when professors of religion have read with avidity what a favourite Author has offered against a truth, if they afterwards refuse, on any pretence whatever, to hear what may be said for it, they wilfully cheat themselves out of truth and happiness. In this manner, it is to be feared, many Protestants and Papists are awfully ruining their own souls.*

T. R.

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A

# LETTER

TO THE REVEREND

Sir HARRY TRELAWNY, Bart. A.B.

REV. SIR,

**T**HAT command, *buy the truth, and sell it not*, has certainly a special respect to that evangelic truth, which is eminently God's ordinance for the sanctification and salvation of man, and the only relief which Heaven will ever provide for the guilty and the miserable. Happy in the possession of this truth, our venerable ancestors knew that they had a cheap bargain, when they had bought it with their blood; and it would be ingratitude to them, injustice to ourselves, and an act of wanton cruelty to posterity, either to *sell* it for gain, or to *give* it away, for the airy honour of being esteemed *moderate* and *candid* men. Yet, how fashionable this latter iniquity is, cannot be unknown to any one, who has the slightest acquaintance with the gospel, and

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with

with the world: and, as we are ourselves in danger of entering into the same temptation; therefore, however painful it may be, friendship demands the execution of that warrant which we have from GOD, to *exhort one another daily, lest any of us should be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*

Once, Sir, we saw you, as we thought, *running well* for the salvation of precious souls (abating for the acrimony of your invectives against others, which did not arise from *the love of the Spirit*); but that you have been materially *hindered*, is conspicuous from your sermon preached at Mr. *Ward's* meeting-house, at *Taunton*, May 26, 1779; upon which, as a person concerned for the inhabitants of the town where it was delivered, I take the liberty of making a few remarks; and the rather, as it was “published at the request of the ministers who heard it.”

To be *perfectly joined together, in the same mind, and in the same judgment*, is both possible and easy, for the men who are *striving together only for the faith of the gospel*; but when a worldly spirit debased the church of *Rome*, it made that schism, which reduced us to the alternative of giving up our allegiance to CHRIST, or our connection with her. What ought to be done in such a case, was plain; but for our conduct, she thundered out against us her anathemas, which (vain as they were) affrighted

the gazing nations; shook the thrones of protestant princes; and in great measure, banished religion and common sense to their native heaven, while some were compelled to weep out their solitary complaints, almost retired from human view. Elated with this victory, and *drunk* with blood, the most invaluable upon earth, what brainless jargon did the *Babylonian whore* pour out, through many long infamous centuries; while attentive *Europe* published, with noisy acclaim, her indelicate effusions, as if they had been divine oracles!—Alas! she was herself drunk with *the wine of her fornications!*

But is not this woman now become *an abhorring to all flesh?*—We must have thought so, if we had not known the contrary; and if some among ourselves had not lately convinced us, that they esteem the sound of popish chains, the ground-work of all political music.

But, why did my honoured friend, who abominates popery<sup>a</sup>, (I do not say, indulge the expectation of pardon in purgatory, yet, in fact) go beyond it, by the hope of receiving forgiveness, even at the judgment seat of CHRIST? We will consider that afterwards. At present, I am entirely with you in the ridicule, with which you so justly treat her inso-

<sup>a</sup> Sermon, page 15.



4     *The Romish Church not our Mother.*

lent pretensions to be *the mother of us all*<sup>a</sup>. A church, which, as papal, was never united to CHRIST, and is only *the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth*<sup>b</sup>, who never was, nor will be a penitent, could be no desirable ancestor, though we are now removed 263 years from the time when the *reformation* began; therefore we reckon our religious descent from the resolute few, who, long before the year 1529 (when *the reformed* began to be called *protestants*), exclaimed against the errors of *the man of sin*, as some did every year since A. D. 606; and the protest of some or other of them, was entered upon record in every age. No person can deny that these men had descendants; and, as protestants, they are our ancestors<sup>c</sup>. But to return.

<sup>a</sup> Sermon, page 9.

<sup>b</sup> Rev. xvii. 5.

<sup>c</sup> In the same manner St. Paul reckons his spiritual genealogy, *Gal. iv. 25, 26*. He was lineally descended from a church and state, which treated Christ nearly as the papists do now. To dissent from such a church, was his honour; and, as she had apostatized from the original design of her establishment, he properly calls her by the name of Hagar, the Egyptian, (who was never married to the Apostle's progenitor Abraham): *For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem, which now is, and is in bondage with her children; but Jerusalem which is above, is free, which is the mother of all those, who imbibe the spirit, and imitate the customs and manners of the ancient, and of the heavenly Jerusalem.*



An imposing and intolerant spirit did not expire, nor, considering the depraved state of human nature, could it have been expected that it should, in the same year 1517, when Luther began to snatch the civil and religious liberties of an abused world out of the pope's hands: and though these principles are now, in a great measure, beat out of their intrenchments behind synods, councils, and associations, by a discovery of the Scriptures' sufficiency, as a rule of faith and practice, and by a general acknowledgment, that the apostolic synod<sup>a</sup> does not empower any uninspired men to impose their opinions upon the world; yet, nothing but a more copious effusion of the Divine Spirit, than the churches at present enjoy, can ever put a final period to those ecclesiastical usurpations, which are such a reproach to the Christian name.

As a *Vine*, the church of God well repays every one, who serves as a providential wall for her support; so Laban was blessed for Jacob's sake.—But the LORD made the magistracy and ministry, which are to serve his church, independent of each other, both under the Jewish and Christian dispensation<sup>b</sup>. Therefore that minister at Rome has wholly cast off the Christian faith, who lords it over his own state; and employs those kingdoms

<sup>a</sup> Acts xv.

<sup>b</sup> Zech. iv. 3, 11. Rev. xi. 3, 4.

and

## 6 *The Rights of the Magistracy and Ministry.*

and powers, referred to in the Revelations under the emblems of *seven heads* and *ten horns*, to reduce every church and state upon earth to his obedience. And though the state affects no such unlimited domination in England, Russia, or the northern kingdoms of Europe; yet it orders its own ministry, whether Protestant, Greek, or Lutheran, to grow under its shade, that it may derive new honours to itself, from the different temporal regulations which it appoints, in the Redeemer's spiritual kingdom.

But *from the beginning it was not so*; for no man was ever prophet, priest, and king, but Melchizedek, and his infinitely greater Antitype, JESUS. On the contrary, GOD has made the *magistracy* supreme, over all persons, in every affair which relates to this life; while the *ministry* is to direct all persons, from the word of GOD, in spiritual affairs, whether they relate to time or eternity. Yet there is this difference, that, while there must necessarily be a subordination of the executive to the legislative magistrate; as the work of all ministers is precisely the same, therefore CHRIST has expressly forbidden them to seek, or accept any distinguished secular honours amongst, or temporal precedency above, their brethren <sup>a</sup>. In the kingdom of CHRIST, there is no other lawful or possible way of being the *greatest of all*, but being *servant to all*.

<sup>a</sup> Mat. xx. 20—28. Mark x. 35—45.

If this divine constitution had been regarded, it might have prevented that doctrinal disagreement, between the Church of England and her ministers, in which (on the part of the ministers) you, Sir, seem to glory <sup>a</sup>, where you tell us, that, "Though the articles of the national church are Calvinistic, yet the doctrines of John Calvin are generally exploded, by all sensible and learned men:—of many such ornaments the established church can boast." Doubtless the opposers of Calvinism, and the doctrines of the Reformation, *are the men!* But, if you are not misinformed, what avail the *sense* and *learning*, which could not preserve them from connecting themselves with a church, whose doctrines they think it their duty to explode? Or how can they be the *ornaments* of a church, who can alternately *sign* and *explode* the same articles?

If these *learned* and *sensible* gentlemen, are too conscientious to repeat a part of the *burial service*, over some eminently wicked persons, or to pronounce the *absolution* in any sick chamber whatever; yet it may well fill them, and every other clergyman, with horror, to reflect, that by signing their assent and consent to the last of these, they are personally, and every one of them, accessory to that ruin which the Roman Pontiff is meditating against this

<sup>a</sup> Sermon, p. 9.



nation; whose emissaries are this moment making use of that *priestly act*<sup>a</sup>, as an argument drawn from among ourselves, to establish their infernal usurpations.—Alas! there cannot be much religion in England, while the established clergy continue to sign one syllable which they do not believe, or which they wish altered, as soon as they have signed it!—Pray, therefore, more earnestly than ever, ye holy friends of our Jerusalem, that God would *reform the reformed churches*; and make *the root of bitterness* detestable to those who *had* cut down the poisonous tree.

St. Paul probably gave Timothy that *form of sound words*, which he orders him to *hold fast*<sup>b</sup>; but it appeared to the HOLY GHOST, that the transmitting it to us, would have made a needless addition to the inspired canon; since any Christian, of common understanding, who is *taught the truth as it is in Jesus*, can, at any time, give us a general scheme of divine truth, sufficient for our salvation. Therefore, when the above prayers come to be answered, whether the *Heidelberg* confession, and the *Assembly's Catechism* are used or not, parents, tutors, and churches will certainly be industrious, to impress upon the minds of their young ones, those religious principles, which contain their own eternal hopes and fears: they cannot do other-

<sup>a</sup> The Act of Uniformity.

<sup>b</sup> 2 Tim. i. 13.  
wise,



wife, if God, who is *light* and *love*, is in them; and their reason will teach them to represent them in an orderly manner.

What these principles are, the holiness and goodness of God must necessarily have immutably determined for us all. At the same time, he would have made us murderers, if he had left us any method of determining it for others, than by the manifestation of his truth to each other. Yet there is certainly a difference (and in all other affairs but this, you can see it), between our persecuting men, because their principles do not coincide with ours, and refusing to join with them in that worship, which, we believe, does not come up to the Mount-Sion pattern. The former of these, CHRIST has forbidden; but we believe that we imitate the first preachers of the gospel, when we do the latter. And I smile at those who call me a papist, merely because I oppose the methods by which, though without design, they are themselves hastening the return of that grievous abomination.

As Dissenters, we neither can, nor would we, “impose human explications of the gospel upon the consciences of men;” consequently, the *danger* and *folly* which you speak of<sup>a</sup>, does not concern us. At the same time, we should be deprived both of human and religious

<sup>a</sup> Sermon, p. 6—9.

liberty, if we must necessarily enter into ecclesiastical connections with every man, who calls himself a Christian, however heterogeneous his religious principles are from our own; and if God himself has commanded such mixtures, he has both enjoined and forbidden us, to *contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.*

—However, as far as we know our LORD's will, we dare not cease to *warn every man*, by word and deed, of whatever appears to us dangerous, either in his faith or practice.

We are not ashamed, Sir, to profess our belief of the doctrines you have mentioned<sup>a</sup>, viz. “*The Trinity, the Godhead of Christ, the personality of the Holy Ghost, and full satisfaction to injured Justice by the death of Christ:*” And so important are they, that, at first view, I hoped you had been only objecting to the *manner* in which *some* had treated of them, till I found<sup>b</sup>, that the men whom you think we ought to embrace in the arms of christian friendship, are those who only respect CHRIST, “as the first and most favoured creature of GOD;” who consequently could only furnish the church with such an atonement for sin, as is neither worth having, nor worth combating. —But has the gospel then no principles peculiar to itself, which a man cannot safely give up, though he still retains the Christian name?

<sup>a</sup> Sermon, p. 8.

<sup>b</sup> Page 14.

Or is it my duty to believe, that every man who thinks his creed is true, and has the same opinion of himself and his brethren, as you have expressed<sup>a</sup>, has therefore certainly drank into the true spirit of the gospel, and *heard and learned it from the Father*?—If so, why do you refuse communion with the Papists? Is it worse in them to exalt the Virgin Mary to divine honours, than in others to degrade the SON of God to the rank of a mere *creature*? And may they not be as *sincere* in the former, as your friends are in the latter?

If the GODHEAD of CHRIST is revealed in the Scripture, it cannot take rank and place among the Iotas and tittles of the law. If it is a truth, it is of such a nature, that whoever is indifferent about it, too nearly resembles those heathens, of whom it is said, *that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God*<sup>b</sup>. Such is modern candour! But there cannot be a greater absurdity in nature, than to believe the GODHEAD of CHRIST, and yet be indifferent about it, whether he is honoured as God. The Scripture must contradict itself, if it vindicates such a conduct: therefore your panegyric upon the Arians does not, and indeed could not, abound with scripture quotations: yet, according to custom, you prefixed a motto to your discourse, which, detached from the place where

<sup>a</sup> Sermon, p. 13—15.

<sup>b</sup> Rom. i. 21.



it stood, sounded well enough for your purpose, viz. 2 Cor. x. 7.

*If any one, περιποιεῖν εαυτῶν, confidently glories in himself, that he is Christ's, let him again betbink himself of this, that as he is Christ's, so we also are Christ's; and possess more proofs of a relation to him, and of a call to the ministry, than he himself can pretend to.* Some, it seems, at Corinth, looking superficially upon the Apostle's conduct, were ready to argue, from his mildness to a church which had so publicly sinned, *that he walked according to the flesh*; to whom he replies, by cautioning them not to force him to exert his apostolic power; and to observe the more conspicuous signatures of CHRIST which were upon him, than upon themselves.

But what had this to do, Sir, with our thinking well of the Arians, whose defence you have undertaken? Did the apostles ever preach against the GODHEAD of CHRIST; or against any of the doctrines which stand connected with it? Nothing could be more remote from their design!—And you certainly could not believe, that because THEY so strenuously maintained the great truths of the gospel, therefore we ought highly to esteem those ministers, who avowedly deny them.—It is easy to prefix words, which you want to put into the mouths of the people, to a discourse with which they have no connection. But certainly some or other of the thirty or more ministers, who were charmed  
I with



with your defence of the modern candour, for their own sakes at least, should have pointed out the inconsequence of your doctrine from your text; unless your friends really believe, that zeal against Calvinism will apologize for the want of argument, as a certain writer <sup>a</sup> practically apprehended that it would apologize for the want of truth in the creed which he has drawn up for the Calvinists.

Will you, Sir, reply,—“ There were stronger “ marks of Christ upon the apostles, than upon “ those who opposed them.”—I allow it: and here I acknowledge your text meets with your design. It must also be confessed, that in stating this *wise* comparison between the Calvinists and Unitarians, as you call them, you have drawn up such a character of the latter, as true charity must wish every man deserved. But why did you omit, or at least not expressly mention, the most amiable of all characters in a sinner; viz. *Humility*?—Are none of your brethren *hum-ble*? If they are, was it kind to name the charge of their being “ *actuated with pride*,” and their “ *exalting their reason in opposition to “ Scripture* <sup>b</sup>,” without confuting it? However, as you have not done it, permit me to say, calmly, that as I do not understand how it is possible, for the mere man Christ Jesus, to imprint such holy marks of himself upon his disciples,

<sup>a</sup> Mr. Fletcher.

<sup>b</sup> Sermon, p. 12.

14 *The Calvinists and Unitarians compared.*

as the GOD-MAN JEHOVAH JESUS can easily effect, so I cannot, at present, see how a man can be humble, who, with a Bible in his hand, denies the GODHEAD and Atonement of CHRIST, which are written, as with sunbeams, in the Old Testament and the New.—Recollect, Sir, your own words <sup>a</sup>, “Stubborn geniusses will think; and they will speak what they think;” and especially that inspired Apophthegm, *Open rebuke is better than secret love* <sup>b</sup>.

After enumerating the virtues of the Arians <sup>c</sup>, you speak highly of their “labours, prayers, supplications, enquiries, meditations, and diligence, in studying the word of CHRIST.” And if I could instrumentally improve their virtues, it would make a large addition to my own happiness. For this purpose, I wish them to recollect who it was that said, *If I honour myself, my honour is nothing; but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.* GOD commands me to

<sup>a</sup> Sermon, p. 7.

<sup>b</sup> In your first confession of faith, you was pleased to express yourself in the following terms: “Like the sun in the firmament, the Triune God, Father, Son, and Spirit, three co-equal, co-eternal, consubstantial, though *distinct* persons, of the *same* and *equal* power, glory and majesty, shines forth eminently conspicuous, and infinitely amiable, &c. &c.”

<sup>c</sup> Sermon, p. 13—15.

*honour all men*; yet, surely, not to honour *all*, under whatever character they please to assume. I am no man's Judge; but if you should arrive at that age of life, in which *actions* are commonly believed rather than *words*, you will see that our LORD's direction, *By their fruits ye shall know them*, points out the only way in which men can be known.

You tell us much of your *sincerity*; but beware of *establishing your own righteousness*, and consequently hastening away to *Rome*, to which many will be carried, like passengers asleep in a ship, and never awake, till they find themselves in the midst of that city of destruction.—But what is this *sincerity*? If it be *perfection*, then we have no farther need of CHRIST; if it be any thing short of that, it can be no more than an evidence of our interest in his atonement, which is the only foundation of our eternal hopes; for the gospel is no remedial, new-modelled, or moderated law.—But it cannot be even an evidence, unless it is a *godly sincerity*. To explain my idea, permit me to observe, that the Scripture knows of but two states that men can be in; viz. *in the flesh*, or *in the spirit*; and every man's sincerity certainly follows his own state. He that is *in the flesh*, whether he is a Christian or a Pagan, Mahometan or Jew, *cannot please God*; for even his sincerity is blind, proud, partial, yea *earthly, sensual and devilish*; being only an expression of that *wisdom of the flesh*, which is  
enmity



enmity against God, and not subject to his law, neither indeed can be. On the contrary, the true Christian's sincerity is intelligent, humble, impartial, affectionate, diligent, spiritual, and full of good fruits.—For CHRIST's sake, search and see which of these, my honoured friend, are the characters of your sincerity. Our neighbours mistakes about us, may be a temporal infelicity to us; but we are undone for ever, if we think ourselves something, while we are nothing.—The Scripture says, *He that believes shall be saved*; but your friend says<sup>a</sup>, “That the man who is  
“ sincere in his profession, and conscientiously  
“ virtuous in his conduct, will be saved, whatever religion he is of.” This is depreciating the gospel, or removing into another.—But do not thousands apprehend, as they imagine, “on  
“ serious consideration,” that they are right, who are yet in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity?

I know not who they are, that call you and your friends *Reprobates*<sup>b</sup>; but waving a subject, for the full discussion of which human intellects are eminently unequal, I beseech you, by all the unknown tenderness of IMMANUEL's heart to sinners, take care that those words may never be applicable to you; viz. *οἱ παλαι προγεγραμμενοι*, who were of old forewritten to this condemnation<sup>c</sup>; for all GOD's words will be accomplished, in whatever book they are written.

<sup>a</sup> Note, p. 11, 12.<sup>b</sup> Sermon, p. 13.<sup>c</sup> Jude 4.



*Eternal Election, asserted against Mr. Wesley. 17*

As to those who are saved, *God is light*; and therefore must have fore-known all the members of CHRIST's mystical body; *God is love*; and therefore he must have chosen them in CHRIST before the foundation of the world, as the Scripture asserts<sup>a</sup>; for the love which does nothing, and designs nothing, is nothing.

Mr. Wesley, on the contrary, endeavouring to prove that election only takes place in time, would explain the above Scripture by *Rom. iv. 17.*; where, before even Isaac was born, God said to Abraham, *I have given, constituted or made thee a father of many nations, before Him who calleth those things which are not, as though they were.* Such a declaration, indeed, supposes a preceding purpose; but God's calling, in time, *the things which are not, as though they were,* cannot disprove such an eternal purpose: and I see no weight in his argument, unless he can prove it as impossible for God to choose his people before time began, as it was for Abraham to be actually the father of his offspring, before any of them were born. As little to the purpose of disproving eternal election, is the other scripture which he mentions; viz. CHRIST's being called *a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*; for though he was not actually sacrificed, till more than 4000 years after, he was then *slain* in the purpose

<sup>a</sup> Eph. i. 4.

and promise of GOD, and in his sacrificial types. But the Scripture speaks of a choice made *before the foundation of the world*<sup>a</sup>; which must either be proved to be impossible, or admitted upon the credit of the divine veracity, which asserts, that *whom he foreknew, he did predestinate*; and that as an act distinct from his *calling* them, and prior to it<sup>b</sup>. And GOD's appointing his people to salvation, through *sanctification of the spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of CHRIST*, no more proves that he did not choose them according to his foreknowledge, from the beginning, and before the foundation of the world; than a man's designing the means for accomplishing any affair, proves that he had not before intended the end.—May the LORD keep this gentleman's (Mr. Wesley's) followers from the iniquity of calling any man *father or master upon earth*.—But to return.

Your liberality, Sir, in bestowing seats in paradise upon Pagans and Mahomedans<sup>c</sup>, must be considered.—But all that I know upon that subject is this; viz. that *as many as sin without law, will perish without law*: on the other hand, *in every nation, he that fears God, and works righteousness, is accepted of him*, through the atonement of JESUS CHRIST; that name under heaven, given among men, by which alone

<sup>a</sup> Eph. i. 4.    <sup>b</sup> Rom. viii. 29, 30.    <sup>c</sup> Sermon, p. 11.

any *can be saved*. His GODHEAD and Atonement save all that are saved; for CHRIST, as mere man, cannot dispose of seats in heaven, to any but those *for whom they are prepared of the Father*. But how, or to what degree, CHRIST may be made known to those who never heard of him, GOD has not declared; and therefore it does not concern me to know.

When you come to the other side of the comparison; viz. to “examine the claims of “the orthodox in private life<sup>a</sup>,” you draw back at first; afterwards you call them, “the “elect of God, holy and beloved<sup>b</sup>,” and very seriously declare of those Unitarians, who had once been Calvinists, that when they were such, “they were generous, pious, charitable, “benevolent, worthy men<sup>c</sup>.” But to have compleated your argument, they should have more than continued to be such, after the change of their sentiments; the scale should have gone down in their favour, with large additions to every one of those virtues.

However, while you esteem them greatly improved in the point of charity, permit me to ask, Is it not a very great sin, to endeavour to bring the world to such a diffidence about the GODHEAD, and consequently about the Atonement of CHRIST, as must necessarily

<sup>a</sup> Sermon, p. 10.

<sup>b</sup> Page 16.

<sup>c</sup> Page 14.



weaken, if not totally destroy those animated exertions for our own, and others salvation, which you recommend \*? Certainly it is an awful abuse of language, to sanctify such a conduct by the appellation of *Charity*; it is putting *darkness for light*, and dignifying an earthly vapour with the name of the sun. But the term *Bigot* weighs nothing with me, while the things for which I am *contending* are not *trifles*, but the most interesting *realities*; while God is my record, that my *zeal* for them is the result of *sober enquiry*; and while I can prove to every man, that I demand for myself no other liberty of thinking, speaking, or acting, in support of my own principles, than what I believe every other man upon earth has an equal right to enjoy.

I am, Sir, unacquainted with your friend, the Rev. Mr. Towgood, who, it is said, first led you into what is called the modern candour. That gentleman will, however, know, at the day of judgment, whether he befriended or injured the world, by the pains he took to modernize your ideas of eternal things.

It ought not to have surprized us, that another gentleman, who has avowedly admitted into his pulpit ministers of (what we call essentially) different principles, should have written a pamphlet, intitled, *Candid Reflections on the*

\* Sermon, p. 16, 17.

*different Manner in which many of the Learned and Pious have expressed their Conceptions concerning the Doctrines of the Trinity*; when a fit occasion should draw him forth to such an exertion. It is said, that this piece had a secondary hand in fixing you in your present religious sentiments; and I will believe it did you good, the moment I see that it has made you more holy, humble and active for the Redeemer's glory in the world. Till then, I bewail the mischief, which I believe it did you; and consequently the church and the world.

Our opinion of *Athanasius* and *Calvin*, comes too late to do them either good or hurt; but while Mr. Fawcett applies the epithet *pious* to whomsoever he pleases, I have the less concern about the manner in which one or other have expressed their conceptions on this subject, as it is no part of my creed *how* the FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT exist; for GOD hath not revealed it: and as the reasons why I believe the proper GODHEAD of CHRIST, are drawn from no other book but the Scripture; yet, as the blessed GOD has adopted into the New Testament, those long uninspired Jewish phrases, *paradise, the kingdom of heaven, the world to come, &c.* I believe I am in no danger of offending my Maker, as this gentleman would insinuate, by using the words *Trinity*, and *Original Sin*, while I affix to them no ideas, but what are

22     *The Moderate Gentleman answered.*

consonant to the Scriptures; and treat them only as the words of fallible men.

But I hope, Sir, you will excuse me in turning my attention to a certain writer, under the signature of *a moderate man*, who inscribed to you a pamphlet, entitled, *The Importance of Truth: or the Danger of Moderation investigated*; occasioned by your sermon at the Exeter assembly<sup>a</sup>. I have not time to reply to every thing in his three conferences; but beg leave to answer some of his most interesting objections.

*The Moderate Man* says to the *Orthodox Christian*,

M. "No one's change of opinion ought to  
"be imputed to him as a crime<sup>b</sup>."

*Answer.* Rom. i. 28. *As they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind.* Gal. iii. 1. *O foolish Galatians! who hath bewitched you?* 2 Thes. i. 10, 11. *They received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause, God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie.*

M. "You differ just as much from him,"  
that is, the *Arian*, "as he does from you<sup>c</sup>."

A. Differing from the *Scripture*, is the only point of Christian dread in this affair.

M. "I do not find that a belief of his"  
(that is CHRIST'S) "Deity, in any form, is any  
"where made necessary to salvation<sup>d</sup>."

<sup>a</sup> Sept. 9, 1778.    <sup>b</sup> Page 8.    <sup>c</sup> Page 21, 30.    <sup>d</sup> Page 25.



A. CHRIST'S works, in general, as well as the following words, fully proved his GODHEAD; viz. JESUS; IMMANUEL; *the WORD was GOD; I and my Father are one; my LORD and my GOD; thou knowest all things;—believe also in me;—all my things, are thy things, Gr.—I am the Son of the Blessed; and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.* And I cannot see how those words can be true, *Every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God; unless we understand that it was the true God, and eternal life, that was manifested in the flesh, as the same author calls him*<sup>a</sup>. So, at least, the Jews understood his saying that God was *his Father*<sup>b</sup>; therefore, say they<sup>c</sup>, *For blasphemy we stone thee, and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.* If they had mistaken our Lord's meaning, his integrity and holiness must necessarily have undeceived them: on the contrary, his answer, on that occasion, was full to the purpose of confirming their idea, that he was EQUAL WITH GOD; for<sup>d</sup> he contrasts himself with those whom their *law called Gods*, so as to exalt himself infinitely above them. In one particular, indeed, he and they agreed; viz. that both had been *sanctified*, or set apart for

<sup>a</sup> 1 John iv. 2. v. 20.    <sup>b</sup> John v. 18.    <sup>c</sup> John x. 33.

<sup>d</sup> John x. 34—38.

their

24     *The Moderate Gentleman answered.*

their respective offices; but in two other respects they differed (*toto celo*) as widely as possible. *They were in the world*; but, considered as Mediator, *the Father sent him down from heaven*; and *they were persons to whom the word of God came*: but his works proved, that *he* had a nature to which the word of God could not come; for he was *in the Father, and the Father in him, as God*<sup>a</sup>.

Denying the GODHEAD of CHRIST, has ruined the Jewish nation for 1700 years; and this ruin would not have been so conspicuously just, if his claims, which they refused, had not been clear. And if Arian views of CHRIST would have saved them, provided they had entertained them, why did the Evangelist John write his gospel against the errors of *Cerintbus*, who denied his DIVINITY, as *Iraeneus* asserts? The gospel of CHRIST is not, nor ever will be, the same as the gospel of the Ebionites and Cerinthians. Therefore I beseech this moderate Gentleman to re-consider his candour, before he attempts to spread it any farther.

Mr. Abbadie's mode of reasoning on the GODHEAD of CHRIST, (viz. "That if some of  
" our LORD's words do not prove that he is  
" God, he must be an impostor, and worse than  
" Mahomet") the Moderate Gentleman pronounces *unusual, weak, shocking, profane, inde-*

<sup>a</sup> John x. 38.—See the *Postscript* to this Letter.

cent, and blasphemous <sup>a</sup>.—But has GOD said so too? Hear CHRIST, speaking of the Father, *If I should say that I know him not*, in any peculiar or divine manner, which is what you Jews want me to say, *I should be a liar like unto you*. Again: If I have spoken *evil*, in referring the high-priest to my hearers for an account of my doctrine, *bear witness of the evil*: and another scripture saith, *judge ye what I say*: and when we *have* judged, as GOD has enabled and commanded us to do, I know of no arrogance or blasphemy there is in saying, that some of his words express that he is GOD, unless he designed to deceive us.—It is real blasphemy, however, to give such a sense of Scripture, as tends to divert men's attention from, and weaken their affection to its doctrines, whether they are Arians, or whoever they are.

M. “The Scripture says nothing, either of  
“the infinite guilt of sin, or of an infinite satisfaction <sup>b</sup>.”

A. CHRIST has taught us, that scripture consequences are scripture <sup>c</sup>. So he reasons concerning the doctrine of the resurrection: *That the dead are raised, Moses shewed at the bush, when he called the Lord the God of Abraham, &c.* and if, as the Apostle observes, *sin is the transgression of a law*, which is a transcript of every

<sup>a</sup> Page 31—33.

<sup>b</sup> Page 33.

<sup>c</sup> Luke xx. 37.



attribute of the Deity; if, by this *commandment*, it becomes *exceeding sinful*; and if God speaks of it as that *evil and bitter thing* which his *soul hates*; is not this asserting its infinite guilt?—On the other hand, these phrases, *Lo! I come—Awake, O sword! against the Man that is my Fellow—God bought the church with his own blood—and, ye are not redeemed with corruptible things, &c.*; are, with me, expressive of the necessity of an infinite satisfaction.

M. “Admitting that the Saviour is equal  
“with the Father, I do not see how a contrary  
“opinion can endanger the salvation of those  
“who maintain it <sup>a</sup>.”

A. This is opening a wide and effectual door for Deism. But what has *Truth* itself said <sup>b</sup>? *This is life eternal, not only that they might know thee the only true God, but also Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent*; therefore, adds he, *If ye believe not that I AM, ye shall die in your sins, Gr.* And again: *Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep.*—And it ought to alarm those, who, like the Jews, deny the GODHEAD of CHRIST, to observe, that those words <sup>c</sup>, *Hearing ye shall hear, and not understand; and seeing, ye shall not perceive*; are *six times* applied to the latter in the New Testament <sup>d</sup>.

<sup>a</sup> Page 34.

<sup>b</sup> John xvii. 3.

<sup>c</sup> Isaiah vi. 9, 10.

<sup>d</sup> Mat. xiii. 14. Mark iv. 12. Luke viii. 10. John xii. 40. Acts xxviii. 26. Rom. xi. 5.

M. " True love to CHRIST does not consist  
" in any ideas which men may entertain of his  
" person or essence, but in a just esteem of his  
" moral excellencies, and a practical regard to  
" him, according to the ideas which they have  
" of his character and offices <sup>a</sup>."

A. Knowledge is the parent of love : and a just esteem of CHRIST's excellencies, supposes such a knowledge of his person and offices, as the Scripture gives, and not merely as the human fancy may embrace.

As to the object of worship, it is confessed, that scripture prayers are commonly addressed to the Father, or to GOD ; yet all believers *call upon the name of the LORD JESUS*, and with the penitent thief, and dying Stephen, pray to him. The following prayers are also addressed to the LORD the SPIRIT : *Awake, O north wind, and come thou south.—Grace be unto you from the seven spirits which are before the throne.—And, The communion of the HOLY GHOST be with you.* Why then does the *Moderate Gentleman* say, that " there is not a single act of prayer performed to the SPIRIT in the Scripture <sup>b</sup> ?" —We were not baptized in the name of one GOD, and two creatures ; or of one GOD, a creature, and a quality. But to whomsoever we are dedicated in baptism, in him we must be-

<sup>a</sup> Page 35.

<sup>b</sup> Page 41.

lieve for the accomplishment of what he has promised.

It appears <sup>a</sup> that this gentleman has read the Socinian objections against the GODHEAD and Atonement of CHRIST, arising from the supposition of his *satisfying* himself, and *mediating* with himself; to both of which the following words appear to contain a sufficient answer; viz. *of him, and through him, and to him are all things*: so “the cattle upon a thousand hills are the “LORD’S;” yet we do not say that he *satisfied himself*, when he accepted a typical satisfaction from some of them, from off the Jewish altars. And by the help of God Abraham pleaded for Sodom; yet we do not say that God *mediated with himself* for that city. The same may be said of the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

He also tells us <sup>b</sup> that the suffering man CHRIST JESUS, “had an intimate, though incomprehensible *union to Deity*—on account “of which union, he is properly God;” and “that the Godhead of CHRIST is the very “Godhead of the Father.” But he denies that the Godhead and Humanity are so united as to become one person <sup>c</sup>; when speaking of the orthodox, he says, “If the God and the “Man are but one person, what is ascribed “to one, must be ascribed to both, which “cannot be, without deifying the man, and

<sup>a</sup> Page 39.

<sup>b</sup> Page 47.

<sup>c</sup> Page 49, 50.

“abasing



“ abasing the God : To avoid this difficulty,  
“ they are obliged to have recourse to the  
“ distinction between the *human* nature and the  
“ *divine*. Thus, *e. g.* they do in accounting  
“ for the humiliation and the death of  
“ CHRIST—his ignorance of the day of judg-  
“ ment—his intercession, &c. which is really  
“ separating the human *person* from the divine  
“ *person*, and so making *two Christs* ; for nei-  
“ ther action nor suffering, knowledge nor ig-  
“ norance can be ascribed to the *nature* of any  
“ being abstractedly, but the *person*. What-  
“ ever CHRIST says, or does, or suffers, or  
“ knows, &c. it must be the *person* Christ,  
“ which is but one, or Christ himself, who,  
“ whatever natures he has, is but one and the  
“ same individual being ; and I add, the di-  
“ stinction now referred to, is merely a hu-  
“ man invention, of which the Scripture is  
“ altogether silent.”

A. What then is the meaning of this ex-  
“ pression, *The WORD was made flesh, and*  
“ *dwelt among us—In him dwelleth all the full-*  
“ *ness of the GODHEAD bodily—and, Of whom,*  
“ *as concerning the flesh, CHRIST came, who is*  
“ *over all GOD blessed for ever?*—We say of  
“ Man, *he eats, drinks, and sleeps, and add, he*  
“ *thinks, reasons, and loves :* and it is no *human*  
“ *invention* to say, that some of these actions be-  
“ long to his animal, and the other to his rational  
“ nature ; or to add, that the *person* who does  
“ these

these things, is but one, though each nature performs these several operations respectively. So the Scripture asserts CHRIST'S GODHEAD and Humanity, and says of the latter, that he died, rose again, and was ignorant of the *day* and *hour* of judgment: These things are expressly spoken of him, as *the Son of Man*. But the following words refer to a very different nature; *My God! thou knowest all things*; and, *where two or three are gathered together in my name, I AM in the midst of them*. Yet these things are all spoken of, or by the same person; "who, whatever natures he may have," as the Moderate Gentleman observes, "is but one and the same individual" person. This is the foundation of our trust in CHRIST, and of the worship we pay him: but if his GODHEAD and Humanity do not constitute one person, it cannot be said that he is God, only that God is God.

But if the Arians think by this device to sink their Saviour into a mere man, as Dr. Priestley calls him, whether the *Orthodox Christian* apprehends that his opponent has merited the name of *Apollo* or not <sup>a</sup>, I must, at least, consider him as a mistaken man, as long as he asserts, that "an Arian, or a Socinian, has as honourable conceptions of the glory of JESUS CHRIST, as" an orthodox Chri-

<sup>a</sup> Page 46.

stian <sup>a</sup>; that the “ difference is not material,  
“ or so great as it has been generally supposed  
“ to be <sup>b</sup>; that it is such as not at all affects  
“ the real glory of JESUS CHRIST <sup>c</sup>;” or yet  
more strongly, “ that it cannot be said *wherein*  
“ *they differ* <sup>d</sup>.”

I apprehend it is the Father only whom the Anti-trinitarians honour, and not CHRIST, any otherwise than as a mere man, in whom the GODHEAD dwells, I know not how, and suppose themselves are not agreed; yet not so as to make the Saviour the same proper object of divine worship and confidence as the Father.

If it had been the will of GOD that we should join ourselves in Christian fellowship with such men, to have quoted one word of his injoining it, if there had been any such word in the Scripture, would have been infinitely more to this Gentleman's purpose, than all that he and others have urged upon that head. But if he can say the things which we have heard from him, he himself assigns ten thousand reasons why we should refuse that connection with the Arians, to which he so earnestly invites us.—To think highly of erroneous persons, is not the *charity* which *edifies*, but, on the contrary, destroys individuals and churches. And if real Christians, by their

<sup>a</sup> Page 46.    <sup>b</sup> Page 43, 50.    <sup>c</sup> Page 45.    <sup>d</sup> Page 56.



mental or practical errors, force us, for our own safety, or that of our connections, to avoid their society; the sin and shame is theirs, not ours.—It is *they* who make the schism in the body of CHRIST.—I love all God's children; but much more that *incorruptible seed*, by which others are to be made such. I can despise the momentary laugh and derision of being termed *infallible*; but how shall I live or die serene, if I suffer Infidels or professing Christians to rob me, of either the whole, or any part of the Gospel?

We are very sensible, that many other personal and local causes, besides Arianism, may destroy our congregations, or vital religion in them; but till *this* Gentleman can shew us one congregation upon Earth, where vital religion is flourishing under Arian or Socinian principles, God's witnesses will not cease to warn every man, *night and day, with tears*, against the *modern candour*, which contains the vital stamina of Deism and Popery; and is the first cup the whore of Babylon sends round the religious world, to prepare them for her future designs.

The *Moderate Gentleman* having named the Exeter assembly, permit me to say, that I apprehend religion has been declining among the presbyterian dissenters in that city, ever since Mr. Pierce's time, who poisoned it, and the neighbourhood, and so eventually Taunton,

and yet more distant places, with his Arian doctrines. If it ever revives, it must be by the power and grace of IMMANUEL JEHOVAH, who, when he comes, will *separate the chaff from the wheat*.—At present, alas! where are there in *Devon and Cornwall*, forty-five dissenting ministers, of dispositions *nearly* similar to theirs, who nobly testified their subjection to CHRIST, at the Exeter assembly (in the manner they thought proper), May 6th, 1719?—The followers of JESUS ought, at least, to be certain, that the *present* assembly is not a combination against the GODHEAD of CHRIST, before they attend it again; for this is the doctrine, *stantis et cadentis Britanniae*: and, as JESUS CHRIST never sent any man to preach against his GODHEAD; so GOD regards no man, but as *he* regards CHRIST; therefore I believe it to be sinful in any man, to preach, or encourage others in preaching against that doctrine; and that it would be sinful in me to cease to testify this to every man. But to return:

“Nothing was more familiar with the Jews,” says Bp. Hurd, “than to convey an information to others, especially if that information was of importance, by natural, rather than artificial signs; I mean, by *deeds*, rather than by *words*; as every one knows, who has but dipped into the writings of the Old and New Testament.” This remark could not have been realized in any thing so interesting to us,

34 CHRIST's two Natures united, a Covenant.

as in the union of the human and divine nature in CHRIST; and it has been eminently verified in this prime instance, by him who said, *I will give thee*, who art the JEHOVAH IMMANUEL, *for a Covenant of the people*<sup>a</sup>. This union had been adumbrated by God's dwelling in the temple; but he resides personally and constantly in the temple CHRIST, to which the GODHEAD has united itself. This essential covenant, which subsists in the two united natures of the Mediator, and gives a present existence to every hope of the Christian, is the original, from the design of which the written covenant was drawn. And I beseech my honoured friend to enquire, whether the Arians do not reject *this Covenant of God*, by rejecting the GODHEAD of CHRIST; at least, the mere man CHRIST JESUS, can be only one party in this Covenant; and that infinitely the meanest.

In a letter to Dr. Priestley, I mentioned some of the scriptures which prove the proper DEITY and Atonement of the LORD JESUS. Whoever denies these doctrines, must necessarily have lighter thoughts of the essential holiness, truth, and righteousness of God, and consequently of the nature and evil of sin, than travellers to Sion usually entertain; nor can they so *establish the law*, as those who believe, that the GOD-MAN descended to fulfil all its

<sup>a</sup> Isaiah xlii. 6. xlix. 8.

require-



requirements, and bear its tremendous curse. And if we deny the union of the HUMAN and DIVINE NATURE in CHRIST, we cannot even believe that the person who died for us, presents the requests of every individual believer before the throne; much less that, as an omnipotent and omniscient friend, he is present with all his people, to influence them to every good word and work; and with all other beings, with whom they have any concern, to actuate and guide their operations, or to controul their malevolent designs. Yet *no man can say that JESUS is the LORD, but by the HOLY GHOST.*

While I am writing, death is advancing. But I am not satisfied with the expedient you have thought of, for the relief of the Arians in another world, if they should find, as they certainly will, “that CHRIST is really God himself.” You say <sup>a</sup> they will ask, and doubt not but they will obtain, forgiveness. But if they should use that word *forgive*, in eternity, it will be an explicit acknowledgment, that their Judge had sufficiently notified his own GODHEAD to them here; and that it was their sin, as we now assert, that they had not properly attended, or submitted to the truth of it. But how does this method for their relief, agree with the concluding sentence of your

<sup>a</sup> Page 14, 15.

sermon, which tells us, from the word of God, that in the grave “there is neither work, wisdom, or device<sup>a</sup>.” Certainly prayer is some work or device: you brought, therefore, God’s word, to confute your own scheme. And other scriptures speak the same language; *In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be<sup>b</sup>; be that is filthy, let him be filthy still<sup>c</sup>*. Our LORD also thus answers the Jews similar hope of forgiveness after death; *Whosoever speaketh against the HOLY GHOST, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come<sup>d</sup>*; that is, he hath never forgiveness<sup>e</sup>. Any hope of that nature, would awfully harden the hearts of the wicked: but after death, there is no forgiving God to be invoked; no Mediator between God and man; no SPIRIT to help in prayer; and the promises are out of date in eternity, and hold forth no pardon for unbodied spirits.

You add, “But if you will, we will allow, for the sake of the argument, that he is condemned. I ask, what sort of a hell must be his portion? Is he to dwell for ever with blasphemers? His soul abhors blasphemy.” Do not sinners of every name, Sir, in the same manner reason themselves out of all fear of hell, being ignorant of the law of God, of the na-

<sup>a</sup> Eccles. ix. 10.    <sup>b</sup> Eccles. xi. 3.    Luke xvi. 24—26.

<sup>c</sup> Rev. xxii. 11.    <sup>d</sup> Mat. xii. 32.    <sup>e</sup> Mark iii. 29.

ture of sin, and of their own state? But as all sin is one in its nature; so there is but one sort of hell; it is prepared for all who love not the LORD JESUS, but reject the only method of salvation; and, whatever men may think of themselves, God esteems that man a *blasphemer*, who says he is a Christian, when *he is not*<sup>a</sup>. May God preserve us both from an iniquity, which cannot be more *common* than it is *infamous*.

I was sorry to see you quote, with approbation, in your sermon before the Exeter assembly, a writer who speaks of our “ assisting “ God to accomplish his divine undertaking;” and another, who says, “ Dei, enim sumus adiutores;” *i. e.* we are God’s helpers. It would not honour the authors of these sentences to name them; and I need not tell you, that the words in 1 Cor. iii. 9. (from a part of which you discoursed) are literally, *For of God we are the joint-workers. Of God the husbandry; of God the building are ye.* If the last clauses of this text declare God’s property in the spiritual *husbandry* and *building*, it is probable that the first declares the same in his *joint-workers*; of whom ver. 7. says they are not *any thing*. *Labourers together with God*, is an improper rendering on every account, says Dr. Doddridge.

But it gave me yet more pain to hear, that

<sup>a</sup> Rev. ii. 9.



you had joined in the solemn work of *Ordination* with Dr. Priestley; whose *Appeal* to professors of religion, &c. shews him to be wholly unacquainted with the Gospel; and whose schemes of *Necessity* and *Materialism*, seem to strike at the foundation of all religion. That Gentleman desires that "Our great *Parent* and "*Guardian*, may only operate upon us by the "agency of second causes, acting by settled "laws, without exerting any immediate influence upon us." But if his scheme is right, we must alter those words 1 *John* iv. 16. and no longer read GOD IS, but GOD WAS, *love*: and in a yet less honourable manner, treat many other parts of the *inspired* canon. He has indeed, the ingenuity to acknowledge, in his preface to the sermon, which he preached upon that occasion, that "the *pious* writers of "the Scriptures, seem to have ascribed every "thing that is good immediately to God;" and that this is "the most *literal interpretation*," and "the most obvious meaning of "scripture language," as well as "the general "opinion of Christians." But these *pious writers*, though inspired by God himself, do not satisfy the Doctor!—No:—he gives "more attention to appearances; and therefore sees in them what the generality of "mankind do not."—And what has he seen?—Things which are "utterly incompatible "with the doctrine of sovereign grace, the  
" possi-

“ possibility of *instantaneous conversion*, and of  
“ any availing conversion at the latest hour of  
“ life;” and things which satisfy him (to use  
his own words) “ that their \* doctrine of a *new*  
“ and *miraculous birth*, is altogether unscriptu-  
“ ral and deceitful.”—This he has the effron-  
tery to declare, in evident contradiction to nu-  
merous texts which assert and imply, that ex-  
cept a man be *born again*, he cannot see the  
kingdom of God.—Good God! when will this  
man cease to blaspheme Jesus and his gospel?  
—I hear his sermon offended many; and I  
hope, among others, you, Sir.—This, at least,  
is certain, that the church of God has no good  
to expect from those ministers, who can esteem  
Dr. Priestley as a minister of CHRIST.

Some time ago you published an obvious  
truth in my pulpit; viz. that “ the Arians had  
“ ruined many once flourishing churches.” And  
though I do not apprehend there ever will be  
again an Arian nation upon earth; yet it should  
be observed, that Arminianism and Arianism  
lead directly, the former to Popery, and the  
latter to Deism; which two abominations mu-  
tually generate each other. And as the devil  
has nothing more to wish, than that *the crea-  
ture* may be *exalted*, and CHRIST *degraded*; so  
we shall have the less reason hereafter to blame  
the papists, if we ourselves now meet them  
half way.

\* The Calvinists.]

I beg

I beg leave, therefore, to ask the ministers, who requested the publication of your sermon, what good end they believe it was adapted to answer?—Was it not designed to *diminish* the Calvinists *inordinate* esteem of CHRIST, and *increase* their love to those men, who think more *moderately* of his glory?—*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*—I must not flatter any man.—I believe your best friends wish you to print no more, upon religious subjects, till years have matured a mind, which certainly possesses abilities, by which human nature may be profited, provided they are kept at the feet of JESUS, and diligently employed in his service. Remember, therefore, how a worthy minister began his sermon at your ordination, April 22, 1777; viz. “One thing is evident, that GOD in his works, providential and gracious, aims to hide pride from man. *The haughtiness of men shall be bowed down.*”—Therefore he that puts off humility, puts off CHRIST.

I have expressed myself thus freely on several subjects, to discharge a good conscience before GOD; and in hope of saving myself the necessity of replying, if you, or any of your friends, should think proper to answer what I have here offered. At the same time, I do not know of any word in this letter, which proceeded from disaffection to any man:—I do not know



the man whom it would not give me joy to serve.

To conclude, as a sinner, I have not a hope of salvation, but what flows from IMMANUEL'S Atonement; or, to vary the expression, what leans on his all-potent arm for support.—And if you, or your friends, ever think proper to bestow a charitable prayer upon me, let it be this, that his grace may more than ever penetrate the heart of,

REV. SIR,

Your truly affectionate, obedient,

humble Servant,

Taunton,  
March 1, 1780.

THOMAS READER.

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## P O S T S C R I P T.

AFTER I had finished this Letter, I was grieved to see the pamphlet, improperly called *The Importance of Truth*, &c. on which I have offered some remarks above, so earnestly recommended by Mr. Fawcett, in an *Appendix to the Second Edition of his Candid Reflections, &c. addressed to the Gentlemen of the Independent Fund*. But, without interfering with any future notice which those Gentlemen may think proper to take of this publication, as Mr. Fawcett has declared himself for the *In-dwelling Scheme* (whether this is, or is not any thing more than disguised Arianism, or rather Sabellianism; and whether it is or not inimical to that *humility*, which is necessary to the acknowledgment of the *Mystery of God, and of the Father,*  
G and

*and of Christ*) ; I thought it my duty to lose no time in declaring, that it appears to be *unscriptural*. Passing over, therefore, all the names which this Gentleman has mentioned in his *Appendix*, as of no material weight to decide a divine truth, I cannot believe that CHRIST was only a mere creature, in whom the GODHEAD dwelt ;

1. Because it is essential to the idea of a creature to be limited in his nature, powers, and enjoyments ; therefore, it could never be truly said of a human, angelic, or even super-angelic spirit, that *in him dwelleth all the fulness of the GODHEAD bodily* ; therefore, *in him*, must mean *in the JEHOVAH JESUS*. And when the Apostle prays for the Ephesians<sup>a</sup>, *that they might be filled with all the fulness of God*, the context shews, that he especially means that *fulness of God's love*, to those who had been his enemies, which renders him *perfect*, as an object of a sinner's hope and confidence<sup>b</sup> : this is that only *fulness of God*, with which a sinner can be filled ; and which, as connected with all his perfections, may be called *all the fulness of God* ; and with this we may be filled, after a creature measure and degree.

2. If CHRIST had not been GOD *essentially*, how could he have said, *As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father*<sup>c</sup> ? But without any term of inferiority, he declares, *No one knoweth the Son but the Father ; neither knoweth any one the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him*<sup>d</sup>. GOD's way of knowing all things, is by an intimate presence in and with them. In this way the Father knoweth the Son ; and without this, no being can compleatly know another ; therefore creatures cannot know GOD, as he is ; for when they *dwell in him*, it is only as when a drop falls into the ocean, and occupies its own contracted place there, without being present with every part of it. If CHRIST had thus only known the Father, he did not know him *as the Father knew him*, or in any such manner as could authorize the use of a term of similarity about it. And if it was the Father's GODHEAD in him which only knew the Father, with-

<sup>a</sup> Eph. iii. 19.

<sup>b</sup> Mat. v. 43—48.

<sup>c</sup> John x. 15.

<sup>d</sup> Mat. xi. 27.

out his having any proper GODHEAD of his own, then he only says that the Father knew the Father.

3. CHRIST asserts absolutely, *I am in the Father, and the Father in me*<sup>a</sup>: but CHRIST cannot be in the Father, as the Father is in him, unless he is in every thing that is in the Father, and *essentially* and constantly so. And if this had not been his meaning, I do not see how he could have said, *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father*<sup>b</sup>. No creature, however exalted, however filled with God, can truly speak thus; and no creature can perfectly exhibit God to view. But both these words are plain and easy to be understood, if we consider the LORD JESUS as the self-existent, unoriginated JEHOVAH, who is ineffably one with the Father; yet distinguished from him, in a manner inexplicable to creatures.—This, Christians, is the fountain-head of your everlasting hopes!

4. CHRIST is *the Image of the invisible God, yea, the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express Image of his person*; but not as man; and if he is so as possessed of the very GODHEAD of the Father; then the image and the original are the same.

5. If we take these words in the sense of the *in-dwelling scheme*, *My Father worketh hitherto, in creation, providence, and grace, and I work*; I can make no more of them than this; as tho' CHRIST had said, *I and I work*; for the creature JESUS did not work these things; and if it was only the FATHER'S GODHEAD in him that wrought, then it was, *I and I wrought*; that is, *the GODHEAD* as it was *in*, and *out of* CHRIST, *wrought*; but this would, 1st. Imply such a distinction in the GODHEAD, both as to being and operation, as I suppose those gentlemen, who hold the in-dwelling scheme, will not admit: and, 2dly, It would suppose that an absolute God wrought many things for man's happiness, which he did not perform through a mediator; which is contrary to the general tenor of Scripture. But the words are plain, if we admit of an unknown distinction, and yet an *essential oneness* in the GODHEAD of the FATHER and of CHRIST.—The same may be said of these words, *Ye believe in*

<sup>a</sup> John x. 38. xiv. 10.

<sup>b</sup> John xiv. 9.



44      *The In-dwelling Scheme unscriptural.*

GOD, *believe also in ME* : in the sense of the in-dwelling scheme it is, *Ye believe in GOD, and in GOD.* So this prayer, *Grace be unto you from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ,* upon this scheme is, *Grace be unto you from God, and from God.*

6. As these words, *Let us make man—baptizing them in the name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the SPIRIT—and, there are three that bear record in heaven, &c.* seem to declare that there are some unknown distinctions in the GODHEAD ; so, if it was not for this, it may be enquired, how man, a social creature, could be said to have been made in the image of GOD ? and how CHRIST could have been a *Mediator between GOD and MAN*, if he had not really possessed the nature of each ?—To conclude,

I am to know no man's gifts, graces, or usefulness, (*after the flesh*, or) any otherwise than as they agree with the word of GOD—for *the meek alone shall increase their joy in the Lord.* Amen, Hallelujah !

F I N I S.

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